

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

No. 415.—VOL. VIII. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1891.

PRICE 1½d.

ENTERTAINMENT-GIVING.

THAT men and women have strong social instincts is so self-evident a fact as scarcely to call for mention. We seek to replenish the fires of our own life at the vital stores of others. In the beginning, it is as intensely selfish a desire as an infant's craving for nourishment; but ultimately the selfishness of it may be transmuted into the most loving service, for, as we ourselves grow more conscious of our own needs, we seek to supply the needs of others.

Women are natural entertainers; and it will be readily granted that in pleasing others they find much of the pleasantness of life. That many signally fail in this must be due to the fact that they have never thoughtfully and earnestly endeavoured to cultivate the gift. It has often truly been said that a sermon, or a reading, or indeed any bit of work, must have a person behind it; then, and then only, will it tingle with that life which will be felt by the hearer or onlooker. So it must be in entertaining. There must be a woman behind it, charged with the electricity of sympathy and kindness. She must be endowed with that capacity for total self-forgetfulness and that power of entering into the thoughts and interests of her guests which impart a rare charm to a hostess. Dora Greenwell's invalid sofa was a source of light and inspiration to many just through this divine faculty of bringing forth all that was best in the people who visited her. And it was this same quality that made George Eliot a most delightful person to meet.

Given a hostess with quick bright sympathies, many evils which make our social circles a reproach are done away with. She who has a true ideal of entertainment will not stoop to play at precedence with her neighbour entertainer, and will be content, if she has made the world a little happier, even if her table appointments and the brilliance of her gathering are not quite equal to those of her friends. Some may hold that entertainments should be purely recreative, and that the tension should be relaxed where only a

pleasant evening is aimed at. But we find that what elevates also truly recreates; and the two can exist perfectly together—nay, never exist well apart.

Nowhere does the capacity of a hostess better appear than in the choice of her guests. It involves nice judgment of the characters, pursuits, and aims of her friends, and decides the fate of the evening. Granted a well-chosen company, her cares are then of the lightest description, for it is one of the purest of pleasures this harmonious mingling of minds. She has the satisfaction of feeling that she has been instrumental in enlarging the sum of social happiness; and that her home is fulfilling one of the many beneficent purposes for which homes exist. But where the company is a large one, and the diversity of mind is necessarily great, a tax is laid on her entertaining genius of a more serious kind. It is advisable to have a definite object in this case, a carefully arranged programme. This is the secret of the usual success of dancing-parties; and quite brilliant evenings may be attained in the way of private theatricals, tableaux, charades, readings, recitations, and so forth. Every circle will have its own favourite amusement. A group of people interested in literature and art become utterly oblivious of the flight of time when some hostess has done them the lasting service of bringing them together. And this is no less true of those who derive their enjoyment from music. But pleasant as such specialistic evenings are, it is conceivably a most necessary thing that wider sympathies be engendered by a mingling of tastes. Goethe says that a man learns to think too much of himself when he shuns society; and so it is with exclusive companies. Be the company what it may, however, in this respect, the hostess will find that the measure of success will be in exact proportion to the thought she has expended. As she sows, so shall she reap, even to the exact quality of her seed-thought. It is no affair of chance, as some entertainers seem to think.

In the matter of introductions there is room

for much nicety of judgment. 'If I introduce two people to each other who have much in common, and so give mutual pleasure, I feel I have done a great and lasting good,' said one lady; and the truth of her remark will be readily admitted. People who have nothing in common will be sure to misunderstand one another; and the profit will be more readily expressed by minus than by plus. 'I should have died a miserable man,' says Vogler, 'had I been forced to leave the world before I found these two'—referring to his meeting with Weber and Meyerbeer; and surely we can go no farther than that in talking of the use of fortunate introductions.

Too much thought is expended on the physical, too little on the mental entertainment, is the dictum on all hands. Money is expended lavishly on food and drink, and too often the mental nourishment is scanty or non-existent. Some hostesses believe their duty lies only in the commissariat department; and certainly there are too many who are well pleased if the viands are choice, and who care for little else. They are like the lady Mrs Hawthorne met on a voyage to Cuba, who discovered there was a litter of pigs on board. She pursued the captain with requests for 'von leetle peeg' for dinner until he was wearied into acquiescence. The evening 'von leetle peeg' adorned the table found its admirer arrayed magnificently in silk and lace for the momentous occasion. She seated herself beside the captain, who began to carve the dainty morsel. But alas! just at that moment the vessel gave a lurch, and over slid piggy, gravy and all, into the too-fond lady's lap. Tradition says that she ate it all, but never asked for another!

To live low and think high is as apt a motto for social entertainments as it is for the conduct of daily life. Dickens has caricatured this for us, as he caricatures most things, in Mrs Bayham Badger's entertainments. 'Every Tuesday evening there was lemonade and a mixed biscuit for all who chose to partake of those refreshments. And there was science to an unlimited extent.'

Yet to provide a feast which shall fulfil all the desired requirements is no light task. A good hostess, whether consciously or unconsciously, seeks to charm all the senses of her guests. The fragrance and colouring of her flowers, the brightness and sparkle of her crystal and silver, contribute no less to their entertainment than the viands on her table. But, as botanists tell us that weeds always grow in the wake of cultivation, so there are sundry weeds grown in the wake of entertainments. There is the modern disease of indigestion. How many can trace the beginnings of their misery to the partaking of unsuitable food at the houses of their friends! No hostess should allow on her table anything that is likely to do harm to her guests, even though it may give pleasure at the time. It is quite possible to provide dainties which are a delightful refreshment, yet which are fraught with no painful consequences. In breaking a law of nature, there may be a momentary sweetness; but the compound is

peculiarly scanty, and the after-flavour is bitter indeed. It forms a good test of an entertainment, this study of after-effects. Does it leave a good taste in the mouth, literally and otherwise? Is it the kind of entertainment we should look forward with pleasure to enjoying again?

To busy men and women, it is lamentable the waste of time involved in fulfilling what are looked upon as social obligations. Life is too short to read any but the best books, we often hear; and if so, it is too short to be spent in any but the best company and in the best possible way. It often happens that the best company does not lie in what is strictly one's own social circle, nor are the most entertaining of entertainments necessarily those of the class to which one may belong. This must, of course, be regulated by individual taste and individual need, for what may be a refreshment to one may be a weariness to another; but most will allow that, as a rule, we are victims to what Ruskin calls the 'frightful conventionality of social habitude.' It certainly must be a matter of grave concern to all who believe themselves to be their brothers' keepers, this present inefficiency in our social life to keep and hold its younger members from seeking their amusements in more questionable paths. Is it not possible to have warm, bright, social evenings, the atmosphere of which will not stifle, and which will be strong in vitalising and attractive power? It is surely not a hopeless ideal this of a society which shall help and stimulate, while it provides recreation for those who need it. Social circles which so fulfil the end of their being do exist, and from their entertainments each may go away saying: 'I always feel better after such an evening. Life seems nobler, more full of purpose, more worthy of one's highest efforts.' Such an ideal evening is described by George Meredith in *Diana of the Crossways*. The occasion is a dinner at Diana's house. 'They rose from table at ten, with the satisfaction of knowing that they had not argued, had not wrangled, had never stagnated, and were digestively refreshed; as it should be among grown members of the civilised world, who mean to practise philosophy, making the hour of the feast a balanced recreation and a regeneration of body and mind.'

Great service has been done in the worlds of art, music, and letters through the stimulus found in the salons of Paris and the courts of Germany. Society cannot make geniuses; but it can do much to foster their talents and stimulate their energies. Much of the finest work of Haydn and Schubert, we can safely say, would never have been accomplished but for the fostering care of the Esterhazys; and Wilkie, Haydon, and many a young artist owed a deep debt of gratitude to the encouragement and kindness of Sir George Beaumont. Haydon, the artist, sketches for us a day at his country-seat in Leicestershire: 'Sir George painted, and Lady Beaumont drew, and Wilkie and I made our respective studies for our own purposes. At lunch we assembled and chatted over what we had been doing, and at dinner we all brought down our respective sketches, and cut up each other in great good-humour.' What could be more delightful than this realisation of Schumann's words: 'In every age there is a secret band of kindred spirits. Ye

who are of this fellowship, see that ye weld the circle firmly, so that the truth of art may shine ever more and more clearly, shedding joy and blessing far and near.'

A SOLDIER AND A GENTLEMAN.*

CHAPTER XIII.—WHAT CAME OF THE SIGNING
OF THE SETTLEMENTS.

'He's mad, of course,' thought Sir William, as he stood and looked after Ferrers. 'But men don't do these things. He can't think of staying in the house an hour after this. I've seen the last of him, then; and now I've only got to manage Dolly. Perhaps it is as well that he is gone.' So he struck across the park towards the plantation to find Dolly. He had just entered the shade of the trees when he saw her walking towards him. He hurried to meet her.

'My dear Dolly,' said he, 'what has this man been upsetting you with?'

'Upsetting me, uncle?' said Dolly, looking certainly composed, if not apathetic. 'I'm not upset. But you say, "this man." You admit, then, that he is not my cousin?'

'Your cousin? No; except in so far as all the descendants of Adam and Eve are cousins. That was but a practical joke for a certain purpose, which I want now to explain to you, my dear. —Come,' said he, 'and let us walk up and down in this cool place, and I'll tell you all about it.' He tried to take her hand to put in his arm; but she withdrew it, and stood looking at him.

'Why,' she asked, 'did you wish to play your practical joke on me?'

'On you, my child?' exclaimed Sir William in some astonishment. 'I've not played it on you; I've played it—or have meant to play it—on your trustees, on Drew and Drumly.'

'How can you say that?' she demanded, 'when you set him to behave to me as if he were my cousin, and got me to treat him as if he were? It was unkind and shameful of you, uncle—shameful!'

Sir William bit his nail, and considered his niece with a worried and critical look. 'Was it, my dear?' said he. 'I am very sorry—very, indeed. But you must know that, if that has been the result, it has been entirely owing to a miscalculation: you must know I never could mean any indignity or—shame to you, my child. Sheer miscalculation, believe me. And I'm not surprised that I should miscalculate, when I had so much to think of. The matter is indeed more serious and even desperate than I have led you to suppose.' He turned aside, as if to wipe a tear from his eye, and out of the corner noted with gladness that the girl's generous heart was moved to something of compunction, if not of pity.

'What is serious and desperate?' she asked.

'You are a good girl, and a clever girl, Dolly,' said he. 'Let us walk gently along here, and I'll tell you in a few words the whole business. I have always meant to set it before you; but the necessity for doing it has come rather sooner than I expected. You know your father, my

brother, was always proud of the family name, and of this old family place.—You are not listening, Dolly.'

'Yes, uncle,' said Dolly, bringing back her eyes from a distant gaze, 'I am.'

'Well,' continued Sir William, 'one of his reasons for going into the banking business was, at first, to make money to help to set the house up again; for we have long been poor. But after a while we quarrelled, he and I; perhaps it was my fault; I daresay it was. I was in debt here, and he wouldn't help me with his money.'

'Wouldn't help you with money?' exclaimed Dolly. 'That seems very unlike my father: he always gave me more than I wanted.'

'Ah, that was different, my dear. He gave me none; and the consequence was that I had to mortgage the estate for a certain sum (mortgage, my dear, means that the right to possess the estate has been given over in pledge or security for the sum of money I borrowed); so that if at a certain time the money is not paid back, the person that lent the money comes and takes the house and estate), and that has gone on till the estate is mortgaged "up to the hilt," as people say, and if I cannot pay it off by the 31st, house and estate and all are lost.'

'And other people will own this place—this wood, and the park, and the farms—and come to live in the dear old house? Oh, how dreadful! And father knew that that might happen?'

'Er—no,' said Sir William; 'I never told him of the mortgages.'

'But you'll pay the people, won't you, and not let the place go?'

'I can't, my dear—I can't! And that's why I am telling you all this. Your father would not help me with money; but he was still proud of the family name, and wished to keep it up. Now, I had only a son, and he had only a daughter—your own self; and his plan was that you and my boy should marry: you would bring the money, and he the estate; and so the family would be set up again.'

'Yes, uncle, I know all that,' said Dolly.

'And you were brought up to look forward to that.—Are you listening, my child?'

'Yes, uncle. But I don't see what that has to do with your curious joke of introducing to me as my cousin a man who is not my cousin.'

'I'm coming to that, my dear. Your father had one reservation—an important one—about your marriage. He believed that marriage between cousins is unfortunate unless they are quite healthy people; because of their relationship, you understand, my child. Now, he got it into his head that my boy, your cousin Will, was not so heartily strong as he would like him to be, though he thought he might be all right as he got older. So before he died, he instructed your guardians, Drew and Drumly, not to sanction the marriage unless they were satisfied of the good health of your cousin. For a long while, as you know, your cousin has been away to grow strong; but he is not yet all that he ought to be.'

'I know,' Dolly astonished her uncle by declaring. 'I saw him this morning.'

'You saw him this morning?'

'I did not know at the time that it was he; but I know now. I only saw him at a distance.'

'Well—as you probably saw, my dear,' said Sir William—'he is very nearly as well as anybody need be, though I should not like to show him to your guardians for a month or more. Now you understand why, in my desperation, I let the man Ferrers introduce himself to them as William Dawlish.'

'No,' said Dolly; 'I don't understand.'

'Look here, my dear,' said Sir William. 'I'm in this desperate and deplorable fix: the estate, the house, and everything must go, on the 31st, if the mortgage be not paid; my only chance of paying it off is by your marriage with your cousin being—not celebrated, but sanctioned; and that sanction your cousin is not ready to win from your guardians. I find, then, a man who is like enough to your cousin to pass for him among people who have not seen him for years, and who is strong and healthy enough to win the sanction by merely showing himself.'

'Still, I don't understand,' persisted Dolly. 'How does the sanction give you money to pay the mortgage?'

'Surely you know, my dear,' said Sir William, 'that as soon as your guardians sign the sanction of your marriage, you have command of all your father's money to do what you like with; while you are recommended to apply a certain part of it to buy back the parts of the Dawlish estate that long ago were lost.'

'I shall have command of all my father's money?' exclaimed Dolly.

'You, my dear, and you alone. And,' continued Sir William, 'I know that you are as fond of the Dawlish estate, and as proud of the Dawlish name, as your father was, or as I am.'

'Is the Dawlish name,' asked Dolly simply, 'something to be very proud of?'

'Surely, my child. And you would not let it, or the Dawlish estate, be lost, would you?'

'I should not like to see other people—strangers—living here.'

'Well, then, my child: it all depends on you. Your guardians are bringing down the papers this afternoon, and will sign the sanction, and hand over to you the control of the money.'

'That means, uncle,' said Dolly, stopping and looking in Sir William's face, 'that you have arranged that my marriage with my cousin shall be settled this afternoon; and that then, as soon as I have in that way got the right to my father's money, I shall pay off your mortgage. You have arranged all that without asking me?'

Sir William looked uncomfortable and somewhat foolish; decidedly the girl had more business faculty than he had imagined.

'I did not wish to trouble you about it. Besides, my plan would not have worked smoothly with you before your guardians if you had known it, and then I thought that as soon as you knew it, and the desperate necessity for it, you would be sure to fall in with my arrangements.'

'That was rather rash of you, uncle,' said she, 'to suppose that I should have agreed with you that there was a desperate necessity for my being played with and put to shame by a strange man.'

Then Sir William was seriously alarmed, and he endeavoured somewhat awkwardly to appease her. "'Put to shame," my dear! Surely not,' said he. 'At anyrate there can be no more of it, for the man has had his reward, and is gone.'

'Had his reward?' exclaimed Dolly, flaming with resentment. 'Do you mean the money you promised him?'

'Er—yes,' said Sir William.

'And did he really take it?' demanded Dolly with flashing eyes.

'He did. Why not?' said the baronet. 'He is only a common low fellow, and—'

'He is not a low fellow!' exclaimed Dolly, turning on her uncle. 'And if he were, it does not say much for my cousin, since you set the one to represent the other.'

To that Sir William had nothing to say. Dolly walked on, and he kept beside her, perplexed beyond measure. Did she, or did she not, care at all for the 'low fellow'? In either case, it would be better he should avoid the subject. For him, the great matter was to win her to his purpose, and he saw no way of doing that but by appealing again to her generosity, and (perhaps) to her regard for the family honour.

'Well, Dolly, my child,' said he, 'you see I am at your mercy—I, the house, the estate and all. What are you going to do with us?'

'Why,' said she, 'do you not let the sanction alone at present, and tell Mr Drew or Mr Drunly the truth about your mortgage, and ask them for the money?'

'Ask them for the money?' Sir William laughed. 'Do you imagine, my child, that I have not thought of all these things? They would not lend me, much less give me, a penny. There is, believe me, no way but the way I have taken; and if you do not join me in it, now at the last, then I am ruined, and the Dawlish name and the Dawlish estate are both lost!'

'If I had the money, you know I would give it you at once. But I cannot—I will not—to-day promise to marry any one! I will not be hurried into marriage, or into a promise of marriage. I have not even been asked yet!'

'That is not Will's fault, poor boy,' said Will's father. 'He is pining to see you and to talk to you. And then there is no attempt or desire to hurry you, my child; the marriage need not come off for a long while; indeed, if you find, when you really know each other, that you bitterly object to it, it need not come off at all. The immediate necessity is this sanction, which is just as much as saying in a formal way that you *may* marry. God knows, it is not for myself I humble myself and appeal to you. It will be no benefit to me to get the mortgage paid off; I am a pretty old man, and I cannot last very much longer!—'

'Don't say that, please,' said Dolly, impulsively laying her hand on his arm, while Sir William wiped an imperceptible tear from his eye.

'All I want is to leave the Dawlish name and the Dawlish place to those who come after me—to you, my dear, and your cousin, I hope.'

'What do you want me to do, then?' she asked, clasping her hands in resignation.

'Only this, my dear—only this,' said Sir William; 'say nothing about your discovery that that man is not your cousin, and appear

when I call for you to see the sanction signed, and to put your own name to a paper of settlement which will give you the control of your father's money.'

'Very well,' said she in cold resignation.

'My dear,' exclaimed Sir William, grasping her hand in thankfulness, and offering to kiss her, 'you are an angel!'

'No, I'm not,' said Dolly. 'And I'd rather—please—not be kissed now. I'd like to walk up and down here a little in the shade, if you don't mind leaving me alone.'

'Certainly, my girl,' said her uncle; 'but don't be late for lunch.'

So they parted; and when Sir William had disappeared, Dolly went back to the little hollow and sat down. She was miserable exceedingly, and her heart burned with shame and resentment. For a brief while after Ferrers had left her she felt that she had been wantonly hard and cruel to him; but now that Sir William told her that he had taken money—money!—for the unworthy, the shameful part he had played, she could not endure the thought of him. How utterly mean and despicable it was in him to do that, especially after all he had said to her. Probably he was now on his way back to London, with his pocket full of gold, laughing to himself at the absurd girl he had had a scene with. With flaming cheeks and flashing eyes, she smote her hands together, stamped her foot on the ground, and left the hollow and the plantation, and returned to the house.

In the meanwhile, Ferrers was not gone. After his violent ebullition of temper with Sir William, he came to himself a little, and considered that on the whole it was foolish to utter such threats as he had hurled at the baronet; it would be wiser and more to the purpose to devise some way of circumventing his designs. The immediate necessity for him was to prevent, if possible, any pact of marriage between Dolly and the lunatic and cretinous William Dawlish. Drew and Drunly had gone to town on some such business, he believed, and some time that day, he suspected, there would be something like a formal signing of contracts. He did not see how anything could be done in proper form without the presence of one William Dawlish or another, yet he thought it well to wait and watch. He resolved, therefore, that he would not go away until he knew that Sir William's trick was abortive, or until he had seen Drunly and set before him the whole matter.

When he reached the house, he went straight to his room and stayed there. From his window he saw Sir William return from the plantation, and by-and-by Dolly, and he argued that it looked well for his own purpose that they came separate, and not as those who were agreed. He did not, of course, go down to lunch; he lay on his bed to pass the time, thinking of all that had come and gone since he had entered on this adventure. He had no sense of hunger, but his brain was on fire, and he was consumed with thirst. He drank all the water in his carafe, and was beginning to drink from his ewer, when a tap came to his door. He said, 'Come in'; when there entered the man Murphy, whom he had seen the night before in charge of Mr Daw-

lish. He bore in his hand a tall tumbler containing a foaming drink.

'Ye'll excuse me, sorr,' said the man; 'but I knowed ye was here, and ye won't mind me, for I know all about it, and this is a sorra black house to be in. Ye've ate no victuals, that I know, and the thirst must be upon ye, and this is just the thing for ye. Divvle a thing is there in it but a drop av the craytur, and limmon juice and sody-water. It's just what they're for callin' limmon squash, if ye'll excuse me.'

'Thank you,' said Ferrers; 'I'm very much obliged.'

He drank it greedily, without stopping to consider the good faith of the Irishman.

'I mustn't stop wid ye,' said the man, taking the empty tumbler; 'the barranite might find me out, bad luck to 'im! Ye'll excuse me, sorr.' And so saying he departed.

Ferrers was refreshed and stimulated by the drink, insomuch that he walked up and down his room to allay his restless desire to be out and acting; but presently he became unconquerably drowsy; so he lay down upon his bed and fell asleep.

How long he slept he could not tell; but when he came thickly and vaguely to himself, and looked about him, he saw by the long shadows that the afternoon must be far advanced towards evening. He sprang from bed, and accused himself of dereliction of duty. Probably, Drew and Drunly had arrived from town, and perhaps the fatal moment for Dolly had already passed! He strode to the door. It was locked on the outside! Then he guessed that it was intended he should be kept there, and that probably for that end the drink had been sent to him. He was infuriated. He rushed to the window—it was but one floor removed from the ground, but the height was considerable—he clambered out without hesitation, and, clinging first to the window-frame and then to the window-sill and a contiguous limb of ivy, which was torn from its embrace of the wall by his weight, he swung himself down. He alighted on a flower-bed and fell to a sitting posture, and before he could recover himself two pairs of stout arms were upon him. But he was too old a soldier to be completely caught by an enemy at unawares. Quick as thought, he guessed the situation: the papers were being signed somewhere at hand, and Sir William had tried to ensure his absence, first, by the prepared drink; second, by locking him into his room; and third, by telling off two men to lay hold of and secure him should he have the hardihood to escape by the window. That explanation flashed in order upon him as soon as he felt himself laid hold of. He kept himself together till the men, thinking they had him, bore carelessly off their grip, when, shooting out one foot and getting the other well planted, he swung out his arms with tremendous force, flung his assailants off, and sprang erect. Then he turned to see who they were, and recognised them as the man Murphy and the Irish-American. If they were on the watch for him there, he thought, the great crisis must be passing in some room accessible from the garden, and what room could that be but the library, in which he had already had two adventures? He rushed to its French window which, he observed, stood open. He was on its

threshold when he saw, in one glimpse, Drew and Drumly seated at the table with papers, Sir William leaning over opposite, and Dolly stooping in act to write.

'Stop!' he shouted, when his assailants again flung themselves upon him. He was in a fury of rage. He gripped them by the throat, one with either hand, as a man of common height and strength might grip two Dutch dolls, banged their heads twice together, and flung them away. Then he strode into the room, and encountered a strange look of mingled shyness and wonder from Dolly. That look inexplicably thrilled him with a reckless pride in his strength, so that for the moment he felt a strong desire to return into the garden and pound the two men together till they were limp and worthless. But he did not.

'What—what—what is the meaning of this?' said Mr Drew, in a soothing tone. 'You've been upset, eh? with the hot sun to-day. Sir William told us you were lying down to get rid of the feeling.'

'Sir William,' said Ferrers, 'is a liar. I never had a touch of sun in my life. But I am a liar, too; I have been acting a lie!'

'Bless me!' exclaimed Drew, pale with wonder, while Drumly sat silent, and grimly sorrowful; and Sir William with a look and gesture aside endeavoured to signify that no notice should be taken of these wild words.

'I am quite aware of the meaning of what I say,' continued Ferrers, 'and I beg you—to look at Drew and Drumly—to listen to me. You are sitting here, I believe, to arrange or to settle a marriage between Miss Dawlish and William Dawlish: that is no business of mine except in so far as I have come before you as William Dawlish. My name is not Dawlish, and I am no relation of the Dawlishes.'

'You did not, then,' said Drumly, 'sign this paper a few minutes ago?'

He showed Ferrers a signature—'William Dawlish'—at the end of a sheet of writing.

'No,' answered Ferrers; 'I did not write that.'

'What is your name, then?' asked Drew.

'George Ferrers.'

'Humph! "G. F.,"' said Drew.—'Go on, sir.'

'I have little more to say,' continued Ferrers. 'At Sir William Dawlish's request, I introduced myself to you as William Dawlish; and all the rest has followed from that. And, though the marriage is no concern of mine, you must allow me to say this that you will regret it, and Miss Dawlish will regret it, if you let anything be arranged until you have seen and spoken to the real William Dawlish, whom I saw and spoke to last night for the first time.'

'Where did you see him and speak to him?' demanded Drew.

'In this house,' answered Ferrers.

'In this house!' exclaimed Drew, and glared at Sir William, who stood a monument of rage and despair.

'I am sorry,' said Ferrers, 'I ever had to do with the shameful business. I will make no excuses for myself,' he continued, with a glance at Dolly, who sat with heaving bosom and averted eyes; and if you wish to punish me, I am ready to submit.'

Drew looked at Drumly, and Drumly looked at Drew and shook his head.

'No, sir,' said Drew; 'there is no need for a scandal. The best thing you can do is to go away and let us hear of you no more.'

'Very well,' said Ferrers; 'I shall go at once. I only ask permission to go first to the room I have been occupying to put on my own clothes; I do not wish to keep anything that has been bought with Sir William Dawlish's money, or that might remind me of this.'

Drew and Drumly looked at Sir William, who gave no sign; so Drew nodded to Ferrers in token of assent. Ferrers was crossing the room to go out by the door when Dolly spoke.

'I should like,' said she, looking at her guardians, 'to ask Mr Ferrers one question—Did he to-day receive money from my uncle?'

'Money!' exclaimed Ferrers. 'I would not accept a shilling from Sir William Dawlish!'

Upon that reply, the guardians looked at their ward.

'That is all,' said she.

So Ferrers went out, his heart bursting with this fresh indignity, which he thought Miss Dawlish had put upon him, and at the end of a few minutes—during which those in the library kept their positions in silence—he appeared crossing the gravel sweep, in an old tweed suit and with a small paper parcel under his arm. They watched him walk away down the drive towards the gate, till he was hidden by the trees.

BRASS AND BRONZE.

BRASS and Bronze are two alloys of copper. The first is composed of copper and zinc; the latter, of copper and tin. Both historically and scientifically these two compound metals are of greater interest than almost any others. Copper was one of the first metals discovered, extracted, and utilised in the earliest periods of our history; and antiquaries are accustomed to speak of a 'bronze age' to express that interval of time during which this metal formed many of the implements used for industrial purposes and in warfare.

Bronze, spoken of in the Bible as brass, is of very ancient origin. We have little or no notion how the ancients got copper; but in all probability large quantities were formerly found in the metallic state, just as we find it now in the neighbourhood of Lake Superior in America, and Baikal Lake in Siberia. This would only have required melting to yield a tolerably pure metal. If, however, they smelted copper from its various ores, it is difficult to realise how they could overcome such a complicated process; and we can only admit that in this respect, as in so many others, the ancient people of Europe were very much cleverer than we moderns are apt to believe.

The word copper is generally admitted to be derived from *Cyprus*, as it was from that island that the ancient Romans first procured their supplies. In those remote days Cyprus and Rhodes were the great copper districts; and even in our own day new discoveries of copper ore,

especially the beautiful blue and green ores—from which the metal is so much more easily obtained than from the copper pyrites and other sulphurated ores of Cornwall—are being made nearly every year in the islands of the Mediterranean. Many of the numerous islands which are dotted over the Grecian Archipelago, on some of which we have telegraph stations, seem capable of supplying considerable amounts of copper ore, if the roads in these mountainous districts were such as to ensure a comparatively easy transport. Unfortunately, in most cases this is not so; and where mines have to be made, roads have also to be constructed, which of course makes the undertaking very expensive.

The ancient Syrians and Phoenicians are well known to have been active traders in copper, and they manufactured this metal into bronze by melting it with tin. Learned antiquaries assure us that the Phoenicians actually came to England and to Ireland in search of tin for this purpose; and a few years ago, some curious bronze articles were found in several of the old mine-workings in Cornwall, which are believed to have been left there by that ancient people at a time when no bronze was either made or used in England.

The word 'alloy' is employed in chemistry to signify the combination of one metal with one or more others. For instance, brass is an alloy of copper and zinc; bronze is an alloy of copper and tin; German silver is an alloy of copper, zinc, and nickel; pewter is an alloy of lead and tin, &c. These alloys have given a great deal of difficulty to scientific chemists, and even now it is not certain whether they are definite chemical compounds or mere mixtures. In some cases, indeed, they appear to be fixed compounds—that is, always presenting the same composition, or containing the same weight of each of the metals; and some can be obtained in the form of crystals which invariably present the same composition. But when we come to consider the alloys of copper and zinc, as well as those of copper and tin, we find that there exist a considerable number of them containing variable amounts of each metal, and differing very widely in their properties. For instance, an alloy of forty parts of zinc with sixty parts of copper represents a kind of brass which will very well serve certain purposes in the arts, such as the sheathing of ships; but it will not answer for other purposes which require a brass containing, say, twenty-eight parts of zinc and seventy-two parts of copper.

We know some two dozen of these alloys of copper and zinc, differing in colour from gray and white to pale yellow, golden yellow, and reddish yellow, and possessing very different properties as regards resistance to strain, filing, turning, polishing, melting and casting, rolling, hammering, wire-drawing, &c. There is a kind of German brass containing nearly equal portions of each metal; it is yellow like other kinds; but it cannot be drawn into wire, and it cracks under the rollers. Seventy-five parts of copper and twenty-five parts of zinc give a pale yellow brass very fit

for rolling; sixty-six parts of copper and thirty-four of zinc give an alloy which is very good also for rolling, hammering, and wire-drawing. It is a very ordinary kind of brass, largely used throughout Europe and America.

Great art is requisite in making these alloys. It is true that they are readily formed by melting the two metals together in a crucible or in properly constructed furnaces; but it is necessary to ensure perfect fusion and to prevent loss of zinc, which is a volatile, inflammable metal, and easily catches fire. Indeed, it is not at all uncommon to find that two alloys of exactly the same component parts differ very materially in properties, in consequence of a difference in the mode of preparation or in the care bestowed upon it.

A metal resembling brass, but said to have been superior in quality, was known in England as 'maslin' as early as the time of Chaucer; and in the reign of Henry VIII. an act of parliament was passed prohibiting the export of brass out of England. Whether the earlier monumental brasses still to be found in our churches were made originally in England is not absolutely certain, the probability according to some antiquaries being that they were of French or Belgian workmanship. Queen Elizabeth invited Daniel Houghtester and Christopher Schultz with a number of German workmen to come over and instruct our men; and a regular brass-foundry was at last opened in the year 1565. Another started about a century later at Esher, in Surrey, where it ultimately failed. But the celebrated Prince Rupert erected other foundries, and from his time brass-founding progressed rapidly. Brass cannon were cast at the Temple Water-mill works at Hackney, and foundries were established in Bristol and Birmingham. The latter city, which is now the principal seat of the industry, made more than ten thousand tons of brass in the year 1835, when the rolling-mills and foundries of Phipson, Pemberton, Muntz, and others were beginning to become famous. The yield in Birmingham now is above fifty thousand tons per annum.

The composition of English brass is about seventy parts of copper and thirty of zinc. 'Prince Rupert's metal' contains seventy-five to eighty per cent. of copper, and on account of its golden colour is employed to some extent in jewellery. The kind of brass called 'tombac' contains still more copper, nearly eighty-five parts in a hundred. It is the alloy used for the manufacture of what is called 'Dutch metal,' an imitation of gold-leaf: it can be rolled into sheets, and these can be beaten out till they have only the fifty-third thousandth of an inch in thickness.

It is a curious fact, which has hitherto puzzled the most clever philosophers, that common brass which is subjected for some time to constant tension occasionally undergoes a remarkable change: it loses its tenacity, and in a short time becomes almost as brittle as glass.

When the metal nickel is substituted for part of the copper in making brass, we get a compound metal, or alloy, known as German silver. The Chinese were acquainted with it ages ago; they called it *pakfong*, or white-metal. It is susceptible of being rolled into very thin plates, and of taking a high degree of polish. There are about

a dozen different kinds, in each of which the proportions of the three metals differ more or less, and these differences cause very wide variations of quality. The kind most commonly used contains about fifty-nine parts of copper, fifteen of nickel, and twenty-six of zinc.

Bronze is another compound metal in which copper is alloyed, not with zinc or nickel, but with tin. Curiously enough, it was known to the ancients under the name of brass, and they made many of their tools and implements of war with it before iron came into general use. It melts much more readily than copper, and is used in making coin, medals, cannon, bells, and statues, as well as in various ornamental work. Bell-metal contains about seventy-eight parts of copper and twenty-two parts of tin ; gun-metal is formed of ninety parts of copper and ten parts of tin. The bronze of which statues, lamp-stands, &c., are made often contains some lead and zinc as well as tin.

It was the celebrated artist, Lysippus of Sicyon, who discovered the art of moulding bronze into statues, although rough castings of bronze had been made long before his time. But it was this discovery which fostered the rage for statues in the time of Alexander the Great. It is said that the Roman consul Mutidius found no fewer than three thousand bronze statues at Athens, and about the same number at Rhodes, Olympia, and Delphi. In later years they were spoken of by Pliny as 'the mob of Alexander.' But it appears that Lysippus did not make more than six hundred bronze statues in all.

We read in Homer's *Iliad* that during the Trojan war the combatants had no other armour than that made of bronze. On turning to Latin authors, it is very evident that the Romans did not know accurately the difference between copper, brass, and bronze. They often confuse the three names. They seem to have considered brass a more valuable kind of copper, and used the word *as* indifferently to denote either. They called copper *as Cyprium*, and afterwards only *Cyprium*, which in time became modified to *Cuprum*. In the middle ages it was not generally known how to distinguish gold from brass, and the latter was a useful substance in the hands of the wily alchemist.

A very hard white bronze, composed of two parts of copper and one of tin, is used for making the mirrors of reflecting telescopes. It takes an exceedingly bright polish, and the late Mr Nasmyth said it can be improved by the addition of a small quantity of arsenic.

About the time that Joseph and William Phipson, of Birmingham, discovered that zinc could be rolled when heated to a certain temperature, and made considerable improvements in the art of rolling brass, the celebrated French chemist D'Arcet found out how the Turks and Chinese made their cymbals and gongs. These are also a kind of bronze or bell-metal composed of copper and tin ; but after the metal has been cast into moulds, it is heated and plunged, whilst hot, into cold water. It can then be hammered by virtue of the 'temper' it has thus acquired, and so made into those highly sonorous instruments. If you look at a gong, you will see that it has been hammered, which it could not have been without having been previously subjected to this peculiar

treatment. Before that discovery was made, gongs and cymbals were imported at much cost from Turkey, and were looked upon in Europe generally as great metallurgical curiosities.

DEAREST IS DEAREST.

CHAPTER II.

It was a very ghastly sight when the old man rose in his bed and looked round him. His face had not a particle of colour in it, and his eyes retained the fixed look which they had borne a minute before. Yet it was evident that he saw, for he cast a glance round him upon the tapers and emitted a ghostly sort of chuckle from his dry lips. 'J. G. D., you're dead !' he croaked, in a voice that had little human about it. 'That's how it is, J. G. D.; you never were bested—never; and so it was only fair to give you a chance to come back and let your nephew have your last words.—Sit down, Charles ; sit down, and write ; and, mind you, all I am saying now is as true as the gospel, for I'm dead !'

In spite of his common-sense, the clergyman half believed him, his voice and actions were so painfully like those of a galvanised corpse. But Charles Dardas coolly seated himself at a table by the bedside, and put paper and ink before him, as if the act of writing a dead man's words from dictation were too common to call for comment.

'That's right, Charles,' said the old man approvingly. 'Now, put down what I tell you. Pat Farrell is not to have the rent of the moneen reduced, for he's well able to pay it ; and so is Tim Higgins to pay his. As for Tom Cox, he is worth nothing, and he may go. Those Midland shares you must hold on to, for they will go up before long.—Have you all that down ?'

'Stop ! stop !' cried the Rector, who had recovered his senses a little. 'Consider, Mr Dardas ; you may only have a few minutes more to live, and will you spend them on these earthly affairs ? I entreat you to let me offer up a prayer for you, that the Almighty may have mercy on you even at the eleventh hour.' And the good man fell on his knees by the side of the bed.

'Up with you, out of that !' screeched the old man. 'Don't I tell you I'm dead ! And is it for a Protestant parson like you to be praying for the dead ?—Go on, Charles ! He's a fool, but you are not ; and you'll know the value of a message like this from a dead man !'

The young man had raised his eyes curiously, at the Rector's appeal. When he heard his uncle's answer, he smiled rather bitterly, but did not utter a word. He now resumed his writing in mechanical fashion. The clergyman prayed on half audibly, trying to relieve his soul from the oppression that weighed it down in the presence of these two automata.

'Write !' commanded the old man again. 'Those brand canal shares are going down ; best sell them at once. The Widow Murphy cannot manage the farm alone ; you must evict her and put a "warm" man into it. I am leaving you a fine property ; see that you have added to it when you die, or my curse will follow you. Don't you ever be bested by any man. J. G. D. never was bested ! J. G. D. never—was'— His voice

had been getting fainter and fainter, and he now sank back on the pillow, and his jaw fell.

The young man rose and again carefully felt his pulse. Then he turned to the Rector, who still remained on his knees, praying. 'It is over now, sir,' he said quietly. 'He is really dead at last!'

The clergyman rose to his feet, staggered to a chair, and buried his face in his hands. 'How awful!—how awful!' he said. 'Oh Mr Dardas, will you not take warning from this? Here is a soul gone into the presence of its Maker without one thought of repentance—not one—occupied to the very last with the world and its devices.—Lord! Thou wilt not require this soul at my hands?'

'You are a good man!' said Charles Dardas, looking at him curiously. 'I wish I had known you before.'

'It is never too late!' cried the Rector, taking his hand earnestly—'never!'

'I fear it is in my case,' said the young man carelessly. 'However, we shall see. Can I offer you a glass of wine? It will refresh you after the painful scene you have gone through.'

'Not in this house—not in this house,' answered the Rector. 'I will walk home—you need not trouble to drive me; the walk will do me good.' And without waiting for the guidance of his host, he hastily redescended the stairs and hurried through the open door into the night.

Once outside, he heaved a sigh of relief. The sky had cleared at last, and a pale crescent moon was shining. The calm moonlight was the same relief to the eyes after the yellow glare of the tapers that the peace of the night was to the troubled mind of the Rector. He stood for a few minutes with his hat off taking in the calm of the scene, and then turned his steps homeward.

Outside Ballinalack he was met by a crowd of men, women, and children, armed with lanterns and sticks. Mr Dardas' servant had brought so wild an account to the village of how the devil had got into her master's corpse, that the whole population—distrusting the powers of a Protestant minister to exorcise the demon—had turned out to assist in the pious office. They had captured the 'jockeyman' of the village, who had a great reputation for circumventing witches and disenchanting chums; and being in sufficient numbers to keep up each other's courage, they were making good progress towards the haunted house. It was rather a disappointment to most of them when the Rector explained to them the facts of the case. Some of the old women went on with the servant to assist in laying out the corpse; but the majority of the crowd retraced their steps to Ballinalack, and had a fresh drink all round in the public-houses whilst they discussed the news.

Meanwhile, in the old house, Charles Dardas sat alone with the body of his uncle. When the Rector left him, he had drawn a chair to the bedside and gazed long and intently on the dead face on the pillow. There was little love or regret in his glance, rather a look of resentment and hatred, which imparted a sinister expression to his countenance, very unusual to it. After a while, he sighed wearily, and went to the window, against the cool glass of which he leaned his hot forehead. The party of old women

coming up the dark avenue took the pale face illumined by the bright background for a real and veritable ghost, and this time it must be confessed that they were not far wrong. However, after the first moment of fright, the maid-servant recognised her young Master, so they took courage and went in.

Two days later the funeral was held, and the lawyer from Mullingar read Mr Dardas' will, which had been entrusted to his keeping. It left all the property of the deceased, real and personal, to his nephew, on the one condition that the latter should, within two years from the date of the testator's death, marry a woman with a dowry of at least five thousand pounds sterling. If this condition were not fulfilled, the property was to be sold, and the proceeds handed over to the trustees of the Adelaide Hospital in Dublin.

'You will not have much trouble in carrying out the condition,' said the lawyer, smiling, as he folded up the parchment. 'With a face like yours, and a fortune worth at least twenty thousand pounds, you will not have much difficulty in finding an heiress. I must congratulate you on your good fortune. I hope you will still continue to give me the benefit of your legal business?'

'Certainly,' said the young man abstractedly. The provisions of the will had evidently come upon him unexpectedly, and he was turning them over in his mind. 'It is a curious will,' he said, after a pause. 'I wonder why my uncle inserted that condition?'

'Well,' replied the lawyer, 'at this time of day you will forgive me for saying that Mr Dardas was a "close" man, and did not like to part with anything without an equivalent. I suppose he valued *you* at five thousand pounds, and did not choose that you should throw yourself away for less. A very good example of his "nearness" in money matters is, that he made out this will himself without consulting me—in order to save my fee, no doubt. As a natural result, he has composed a document which lends itself to evasion with the greatest ease. For, let us suppose that you want to marry a penniless girl—and here he looked hard at Charles Dardas from under his eyebrows—'all you would have to do would be to settle five thousand pounds upon her by deed of gift, and then she becomes an heiress within the terms of the bequest. If I had been consulted about the will, I would have inserted clauses which would effectually have stopped up that loophole. But as I had neither part nor lot in the matter, I am quite ready to give you any assistance in my power to evade the condition, should you find it at any future time a restraint upon your liberty.—Good-bye, sir; I rely on your promise to employ me; and, with a smile, the lawyer departed, congratulating himself on having done a good day's work, and laid the foundation of much profitable business. For his car-driver was a friend of Biddy Moran's, and had given the man of law a hint of how matters had stood between the dead man and his heir, which hint the lawyer was quite capable of expanding and acting upon.

When he was left alone, Charles Dardas went to his own room, and seating himself at his desk, began a letter, which was evidently not an easy one to write. Sheet after sheet was begun, only

to be torn up and consigned to the waste-paper basket. At last he saw that he had come to the last sheet of note-paper in his secretaire, and that if he spoiled this, he would be unable to continue his letter without a fresh supply from Ballinalack. So, setting to work desperately, he wrote on, not daring to read what he had penned, lest he should be driven to destroy it.

'**M**Y DEAREST MARY!' he wrote, 'I wonder what you will say when you receive this letter, and realise that it is in my handwriting. I do not think you will throw it aside unopened; you are not cruel enough for that! I am free at last, Mary! If you only knew what that means to me. I have fulfilled my share of the bargain—I have finished my slavery, and now I have gained my reward. My uncle has left me the whole of his property, valued at about twenty thousand pounds, on the one condition that I marry within the next two years a woman with a fortune of five thousand pounds. I was terrified when I heard the condition; but my lawyer advises me that it is easily to be evaded by a deed of gift making over the required sum to the girl I love. So that now nothing stands in the way of our marriage. I myself will give you your dowry of five thousand pounds, and it will be yours for ever, to spend how you wish, and to leave to whom you like.'

'You have too much good sense, I am sure, to reproach me with my conduct of late years, although you did not answer my last letter. You know that my uncle insisted on my breaking off our engagement and ceasing our correspondence, as a condition of his making me his heir. And you know how impossible it would have been for two people like ourselves to marry without money. Surely, then, I took the wisest course, and you understand that I did. We can marry now, with a good competence, and live happily for the rest of our lives. You will find plenty to do here, for the people are semi-savages, though affectionate enough in disposition; and the house and farm need much to be done to them.'

'Perhaps you may still be angry with me, Mary; but you *know* you love me as I love you. I rely on your love, and I am sure I shall not find it wanting. Just send me a line to fix the day, and I will have a deed of gift drawn up and present it to you with my own hands in Dublin. I shall be so lonely here, till you come!—Ever your loving

CHARLES!'

He closed the letter without reading it, and put it in his pocket, intending to walk out to the village and post it. But he had not foreseen the curiosity of Biddy Moran, who caught him by the arm when he appeared at the door of her post-office, and insisted on his coming indoors to tell her all about the poor Master's last moments. Charles Dardas was, at bottom, kind-hearted, and had a liking for Biddy, so did not care to hurt her by a refusal. She was profuse in tears and blessings and good wishes for him.

'There was some,' she said meditatively, 'who thought to call in Tim Healy, the jockeyman, to cure the old Master. And sure if any one could have cured him, it would have been Tim.—Does your honour know little Pat Geoghegan, the baker's son? Last Christmas he got a terrible

falling of the roof of the mouth, and he could take neither bite nor sup; so they called in Tim. "Musha, then!" says he when he sees him, "that's aisy cured!" And with that he gets on a chair and takes Pat by the hair of the head, and lifts him up off the ground, and he kicking and striving to squeal, for all the world like a pig when they are ringing it. With that, fiblop goes something, and the roof of his mouth came up again, drawed up off his tongue, like. And he was well at wanst. Oh, Tim is a great doctor entirely! I wouldn't wonder, now, if he had cured the old man. But maybe if he had, yourself wouldn't have been too well pleased, for he led you a hard life of it, Master Charles!'

Charles Dardas had laughed heartily at the Irish version of a practical cure for quinsy, but at Biddy's last words his face darkened, and he addressed her impressively.

'See here, Biddy! Let me hear no more of that. My uncle was kind enough to me, whatever he was to other people, and I'll not hear a word said against him, now he is dead. You may just let the Ballinalack people know that. I am ready to do the right thing by them if they act fairly by me. But if I hear of any stories being told about my uncle, or me, or my affairs, I will let them know that I can be as hard a landlord as ever they had. Do you understand me?'

'Av coarse, I do, sir,' said Biddy humbly. 'And shure, when all is said and done, the old Master was as good as the rest of us. God rest his soul! I never asked better than to live with him till himself turned me away.'

Charles smiled, and went out, posting his letter as he did so. Miss Moran always made a point of reading the addressees of the correspondence that passed through her hands, before handing it over to the mail-cart. When she saw a letter addressed in Charles Dardas' handwriting to 'Miss Mary Davidson, Rathgar Road, Rathmines, Dublin,' she formed her own conclusions, but judged it safer not to communicate them to any but two or three of her especial cronies, who, with her, waited eagerly for an answer.

It came by the return mail, and was forwarded with some other letters to the Dardas mansion by a special messenger—the very Pat Geoghegan of the 'fallen palate,' who had strict injunctions to watch the young Master while he read it and see how he took it. But this well-meant attempt at espionage was frustrated by Charles Dardas, who put the letter in his pocket when he received it, and carried it to his room for private perusal. Pat, however, was equal to the occasion, and having been promised a penny if he succeeded in his commission, composed a telling narrative of how 'the Master was strung all of a heap like, and turned as white as a sheet,' &c. The inventive power displayed by him was quite worth a penny, and he duly earned it.

Charles Dardas sat and looked at the envelope a long time before he opened it. To tell the truth, he was far from being so confident of the answer of his sweetheart as he had pretended. He had serious doubts, deep down in his own heart, of the course he had pursued, and though he had succeeded in making his own conscience pretty comfortable, he dreaded that of a woman, whose insight into the principles of right and wrong may easily be argued into silence, but

is not so easily convinced as that of a man. At last he broke the seal and began the letter.

'DEAR CHARLES,' it ran. 'You say that you know I love you ! Well, I own it ; it is true. I do love you, and I always shall. In that nothing you have done or can do will ever make any difference. In this letter I am going to try to put things clearly between us, for at any cost truth is best, is it not ?'

'Knowing that I love you, you ask me to condone your sacrifice of me, for the sake of money, and your breaking of our engagement. I think, Charles, my love is so strong that I can do that too ! But then, you ask me to share in the wealth that you have acquired by your sacrifice—and, more than that, to assist you in evading the conditions on which you acquired that wealth. You ask me to receive a bribe of money—to sell myself and my self-respect for a home, a vocation, and a few thousand pounds. That, Charles, I cannot do.'

'Let us put love aside, and reason the matter out on the practical grounds which you think superior. You deliberately gave me up, years ago, rather than lose your chance of inheriting your uncle's fortune—though for that fortune you might have had to wait ten, nay, twenty years. I did not reproach you then, and I will not now ; but oh ! Charles, how can you expect me to trust myself to you now, when I have learned by experience that you love money more ? I could not do it. I should always have in my mind the feeling that money was more to you than I was. It would be a profanation of the sacred tie of marriage.'

'And then, again, you know my views of right and wrong. If a man's will means anything, it means an expression of the wishes of the dead, which, to my mind at least, are as binding when written down in a document without a signature, as when embodied in the most legal form. You ask me to help you to evade the dead man's wishes—nay, to run flatly contrary to them—for you must see that that condition was expressly intended to bar your marriage with me ! And yet you would take his money ! Charles, I cannot believe that you would do this yourself, if only you think it over.'

'And yet, I own again that I love you ; and what is more, I believe that you love me, in spite of these past years. You are young, strong, well educated, a man to make your name in the world. If I understand you, the income of the property is yours unconditionally, for the next two years. Use it to start yourself in a profession ; you are sure to get on. Let those two years be the time of our real betrothal ; and at their end, when all that money, which has a curse upon it, is gone from you, we will marry and live as best we can. I shall not be afraid to trust myself to you then ! No ! I shall be able to look up to you as my husband, to admire you as a noble man who has preferred love and righteous dealing to money. Oh Charles, if you knew how I hope and pray that you may be guided to do this !—if you knew what a woman's love is, and how it longs to see its object standing high above his fellow-men—a hero who can be worshipped as well as loved !'

'Think before you write again, and, if you

have not forgotten how to pray, pray earnestly on the matter before you decide, for you are deciding the happiness of two lives, and perhaps—I speak it with all reverence—the future of your own soul ! After all that I have said, you will understand me when I sign myself as in bygone days—
Ever your loving
MARY !'

Charles Dardas' face had grown darker and darker as he read. When he had concluded, he deliberately tore the letter into four pieces and put them on the blazing turf in the fireplace. The paper curled, shrivelled, and then flamed up, and flew in the fierce blast up the chimney. He watched the last fragment disappear, and then turned and left the room.

GIBRALTAR FOR TWENTY CENTURIES.

MAJESTIC Gibraltar, the sleepless sentinel of the Mediterranean, rears its beetling front sheer from the depths of the ocean. To the ancients it was an object of awe and veneration ; to the moderns for twelve hundred years it has been a bone of contention and a coveted possession. It has experienced fifteen memorable sieges, and its history in great measure centres round those successive conflicts—a stirring record of capture and recapture, siege and countersiege. But our minds have been so occupied with the history of its later sieges, that we are apt to regard Gibraltar as an eighteenth-century product. This would be a grievous error ; for, long before the days of good King Alfred, Gibraltar had a history at once eventful and romantic.

Gibraltar has been known since the days of the Phenician navigators. In the primitive geography of the early Greeks and Romans it was Calpe, and formed one of the renowned Pillars of Hercules, that for centuries were believed to be the western boundary of the habitable globe. The twin pillar was Abyla, a lofty eminence on the African side near Ceuta.

The rock is situated at the extremity of a low sandy peninsula, and is formed of Jurassic limestone on a Silurian base. It is three miles in length, of an average breadth of three-quarters of a mile, and is about seven miles in circumference. It attains its greatest height in O'Hara's Tower, fourteen hundred and eight feet above the sea. The signal station is twelve hundred and fifty-five feet in height. Outlined against the evening sun the rock as a whole presents the figure of a lion couchant, with its head turned towards Spain. Nor in form alone is it the symbol of the king of beasts. Its teeth are those murderous batteries that bristle on every part of that giant 'head' and its roar is the thunder from their thousand iron throats.

We have no certain information that Gibraltar was recognised and employed as a place of strength before the eighth century of our era. But in 711 A.D. the Saracen leader Tarik-ibn-Zeyad, a general of the Calif Al Walid, crossed from Africa for the invasion of the kingdom of the Visigoths. He was at once impressed with its strength and strategic importance. Accordingly, he fortified it both to form a base of operations and to afford a ready means of access from the African coast. From the leader, Tarik, the place was named Gebel-el-Tarik (Tarik's Hill),

a corruption of which gives us Gibraltar. Thus the 'lion' passed into the hands of the Moors ; and for eight hundred years the banner of the Prophet floated over it in spite of the valour and enthusiasm of the Christian warriors.

The first siege was in 1309. In that year it was taken by Alonzo Perez de Guzman for Frederick IV. of Spain. He, like Romulus of old, endeavoured to attract inhabitants to the place by making it an asylum for thieves and murderers, and by granting exemption from import or export duties.

In 1315 Gibraltar was besieged for the second time. Ismail ben Ferez brought up his forces and strove to make himself master of it. But he was unsuccessful. However, no long respite was allowed the garrison. The third siege began in 1333. Vasco Paez de Meira, the governor, had suffered the fortifications to decay, and the numbers of the garrison to be seriously diminished. Thus, when it was attacked in force by the army of Mahomet IV., king of Fez, it was compelled to capitulate. Scarcely was the capitulation an accomplished fact, when the fourth siege was set afoot. Alfonso, king of Castile, strove to recover his lost possession. His attack was indeed valiant and determined, but at the same time useless and unsuccessful. He was at length fain to raise the siege, and content himself with a tribute for the rock from Abdul Melek of Granada.

Alfonso was indeed baffled, but not disheartened. In 1344 he attacked Algeciras with success, and was encouraged once more to try his fortune on Gibraltar. Thus came the fifth siege of the rock. In 1349 he invested it in strength ; but in 1350 he was carried off by the plague, and so the siege came to an untimely end.

There was now respite from siege for a period of sixty years ; but in 1410 there was another struggle for the coveted possession. Again it was lost and won. Yussef III., king of Granada, succeeded in wresting it from the king of Morocco. This was the sixth siege.

Once more the Spaniards determined to oust the infidel, and again laid siege to the rock, and the seventh siege was begun. The commander of the attacking forces was the Spanish Count of Niebla, Enrico de Guzman. The attempt was an utter failure, and proved disastrous both to the general and to his forces.

Soon, however, a brighter day dawned for Spanish chivalry and pride. In 1462 the fortress was invested by a hostile force for the eighth time. The Christian warriors again drew the leaguer of battle round the devoted rock. Their leader was Alonzo de Arcos ; and in August, Gibraltar was finally wrested from the Moors, and the Crescent was replaced by the Cross. Thus, after a lapse of eight long centuries, the fortress passed once more under the Christian sway, and under it has remained since that day.

At last the Spaniards had won that proud possession, for which they had striven for hundreds of years ; but they were not to be permitted to enjoy it in peace. And, strange to say, the enemy on this occasion came from within, from themselves. The Duke of Medina Sidonia, a powerful grandee, had assisted at the capture of the rock. When it was at length won, he was seized with the desire to possess it for himself. Ferdinand IV., his king, naturally was

opposed to this, and for some time was able to maintain the claims of the Crown. The Duke, however, was not to be baffled, and appealed to arms. After a struggle, he succeeded in making himself master of the place. Thus Gibraltar was besieged for the ninth time.

The king was now fain to make a compromise. Accordingly, in 1469, he declared the son and heirs of the Duke governors of the rock for ever. In 1479, Ferdinand and Isabella made the second Duke Marquis of Gibraltar ; but in 1492, Don Juan, the third Duke, was allowed to retain possession of the fortress with great reluctance. A stronger step was taken in 1501, when Garcilaso de la Vega was ordered to take possession of Gibraltar in the name of the king. It was then incorporated with the rest of the Spanish dominions. Naturally enough, Don Juan was not disposed thus tamely to yield up a possession of such honour and power. He assembled a force, and added a tenth to the long series of sieges already recorded. Needless to say the attempt was a failure.

Peace now reigned over the silent 'lion' for thirty-four years. It was the calm before the storm. An enemy terrible indeed was soon to encircle the rock with his fanatic hordes, flushed with conquest and success. The pirates of Algiers had sworn to plant the Crescent once more upon the rocky summit. The struggle was fierce and bloody ; but the torn and shattered followers of the Prophet were forced to quit the field. Thus closed the eleventh siege.

Spain was now in the height of her power and prosperity. Her sons were vigorous and high spirited. Great efforts were therefore made to refortify and strengthen Gibraltar in every way. Their exertions were conspicuously successful, and the fortress was considered throughout Europe as impregnable. This belief was, however, dispelled in 1704, when Sir George Rooke, with a combined English and Dutch fleet, and assisted by a body of troops under Prince George of Hesse-Darmstadt, planted the British flag upon its battlements. After a vigorous bombardment, they landed in force and carried the fortress by assault. Through unaccountable oversight, the Spaniards had allowed the garrison to be reduced to the perilous number of one hundred and fifty men. Such, then, was the twelfth siege.

No sooner was their proud possession lost to them, than the Spaniards realised their insensate folly, and determined to recover it at all hazards. Accordingly, before the captors should have time to strengthen the fortifications, they invested it by land and sea. Gibraltar was captured by the British on the 24th of July, and on the 13th of October the siege was begun. The Spanish fleet was, however, dispersed by Sir John Leake. On land, their forces experienced no better fortune. The Marquis of Villadarias fared so badly that he was superseded by Marshal Tesse. Even he could not command success ; and in 1705 he was compelled to raise the siege.

During the subsequent twenty years there was cessation from hostilities. Instead of attack and defence, negotiations during all those years were conducted for the peaceful surrender of the fortress. At last, in 1726, the Spaniards had recourse to arms, and the fourteenth siege was soon in progress. The defence was conducted

under General Clayton and Lord Portmore. It was splendidly effectual. On the 23d of June an armistice was agreed on; and although the war dragged on for two years longer, the siege was practically at an end. The Spaniards thus baffled in negotiation and in arms, were forced to endure what they could cure neither by might nor counsel.

Gibraltar now enjoyed peace for half a century. Seldom, indeed, had the great fortress been so long free from strife and conflict. Then the clouds began to gather, and the storm burst with a fury that shook the very Pillars of Hercules themselves. The fifteenth siege of Gibraltar, known as the Great Siege, was rapidly closing in upon the devoted garrison. Britain was in the thick of a desperate struggle with her revolted American colonies. In 1778, France had acknowledged America as an independent power. This naturally led to a declaration of war against her. Spain took the opportunity to join the hostile coalition, and at once made a most determined effort to recover Gibraltar. Their plan of operations was a blockade. They therefore invested it by land and sea in the strictest manner, and by cutting off all supplies, strove to reduce the place by famine. They had very nearly succeeded, when Admiral Darby contrived to bring the long-looked-for supplies and reinforcements. The Spaniards were mortified to have success thus dashed from their grasp. The blockade was made stricter than ever, and none might come forth from the rock nor enter into it. Once more success seemed near. The garrison were in dreadful straits—a fact quite well known to the besiegers. To the utter confusion of the Spaniards, however, almost at the last moment the topsails of a mighty armada rose above the horizon. It was the British fleet. Strong men wept for joy as a hundred sail of their native land swept proudly into the bay, laden with everything that the hearts of famine-stricken men could desire. They were convoyed by a gallant show of Britain's men-of-war—the dreaded 'wooden walls' for those were the days of Nelson and Trafalgar. The Spaniards were now totally exasperated, and turned the blockade into a siege. The blockade had commenced in June 1779, and now, in 1781, before the unlading could be finished, a terrific bombardment was opened upon the place.

In July 1782 the Spaniards were reinforced by the French. Preparations were now made for a grand assault. A powerful fleet was assembled round the battered rock. Their chief hope, however, was ten floating batteries designed by D'Arcon, a French engineer. Ten Spanish battleships were sacrificed for these. Their tall sides were cut down, leaving but one deck, on which were planted the heaviest known ordnance. With such skill were they constructed as to be deemed invincible.

Meantime, the garrison within were not passing their days in slumber. They saw only too well how dreadful would be the conflict, and strained every nerve to combat their opponents. 'Old Elliott,' the grim old Scot, was the life and soul of the fortress. His means of offence was in all seven thousand men and eighty guns. Furnaces also were prepared for a constant supply of red-hot shot.

On the 13th of September the final struggle began. The Britons within were ready; and even before the great batteries had quite come into position, the red-hot iron shower poured fast upon them from above. Soon it was answered from every part of the hostile line. The scene was indescribable. Travellers have told us the horrors of a tropical thunder-storm; but no tropical thunder-storm ever shot such lightnings and thunders. Four hundred of the heaviest guns were blazing and crashing at the same moment. The shock was tremendous. The very earth seemed to rock and tremble under the incessant discharge. All through the day the conflict raged. Night settled down, 'and still Elliott's guns thundered defiance from the rock.' By one o'clock, two of the floating batteries were a prey to the flames. By morning, nine out of the ten 'invincible' batteries were destroyed, together with a great part of the fleet. Every resource of power and skill had been employed in vain; and although the blockade lasted on till February 2, 1783, the contest was recognised as over. Elliott and his eighty guns had indeed given a good account of themselves; and the old war-worn veteran was rewarded with a peerage, and became Lord Heathfield.

We are so much accustomed to think of Gibraltar as a fortress that we are apt to overlook the fact that it is besides a considerable town and a flourishing seaport. It has been a free port since 1705. Its total population numbers some twenty-five thousand, including from five to six thousand soldiers. The governor exercises all the functions of the legislative and executive, and is always an officer of experience and ability. For the purely local business of the town there is a Board of Sanitary Commissioners. The whole community is, however, regulated by military usage. This arises greatly from the circumstance that the gates are opened and shut precisely at gun-fire morning and evening.

Gibraltar is the strongest British garrison abroad, and costs from three to four hundred thousand pounds yearly. No wayfarer may sojourn in Gibraltar without a pass from the Town Major. If he desires to prolong his stay, he must find a consul or householder to be responsible for his conduct. Permits are granted for only short periods—ten, fifteen, or twenty days. They can, however, be renewed.

THUMB NOTES.

WERE it left to the ladies to decide the relative importance of the five fingers, the pride of place would certainly be accorded to the fourth finger, as the bearer of the outward sign of wifehood. Granting that honourable privilege to be sufficient to entitle the fourth finger to rank above its fellows, it is a question if it rightly enjoys the privilege. It has been contended that the master-finger was originally the recipient of the badge of matrimony, chiefly, if not entirely, on the evidence of Tom D'Urfe and Samuel Butler—the first-named writing of a courtship so fast and furious that

Ere three days about were come,
The ring was put upon the thumb;

and Butler decrying the abolishing of

That tool of matrimony, a ring,
With which the unsanctified bridegroom
Is married only to a thumb.

But then he goes on :

The bride to nothing but her will,
Which nulls the *after-marriage* still;

which may be read to mean that the thumb-ring ceremony was merely the preliminary one of formal betrothal. In the other case, it does not follow that if the ring was put upon the thumb, it stayed there; since the old marriage ritual prescribed that the ring should be put upon the thumb at the words, 'With all my worldly goods I thee endow'; placed in turn upon the second, third, and fourth finger, on which it finally remained.

Southey tells us that in the time of the first two Georges, ladies transferred the wedding-ring to the thumb after the ceremony, and that it is represented so worn in portraits of the period. He might have gone farther back. The heroine of Southerne's *A Maid's Last Prayer* declares of a lover : 'Marry him I must, and wear my wedding-ring on my thumb, too, I am resolved'; from which it may reasonably be inferred that to do so was rather the whim of the few than the habit of the many. Portraits of Elizabethan dames weaving their wedding-rings upon their thumbs are said to be extant. Possibly the rings were not wedding-rings, ringing the thumb being an old feminine fashion. It was upon that member of the hand Chancer's Canace carried her wonder-working hoop; and a mummy-case in the British Museum bears a representation of an Egyptian lady, the thumbs of whose crossed hands are each encircled by a ring. In the days of Queen Anne, according to the *Spectator*, the feminine thumb-ring was the badge of widowhood; and women tired of single-blessedness were wont to don it, and, as 'jolly widows,' achieve conquests denied to them as spinsters.

Men's thumb-rings are no rarities to collectors. Some of the Roman specimens must have been cumbrous wear, one in the Montfaucon collection, bearing the bust of Trajan's consort, Plotina, measuring over three inches across. Mediæval churchmen of high degree did not allow 'the largest, first, and shortest of the fingers' to go unadorned. A massive gold ring was found upon the thumb of the supposed skeleton of Hilary, Bishop of Chichester, who died in 1169; and the recumbent effigy of Bishop Oldham, in Exeter Cathedral, is remarkable for the pressed-together thumbs being enclosed by a single ring. When the shrine of St Thomas à Becket was robbed of its treasures, the famous archbishop's thumb-ring, given to him by the king of France, graced with a ruby the size of a hen's egg, found its way to the thumb of bluff King Hal; and as the humour of the king is always voted just the thing, we may be sure the royal hand was not the only one so decked at court. Mayors and aldermen imitated their betters. 'When I was about thy years, Hal,' says the Fat Knight, 'I was not an eagle's talon in the waist; I could have crept into an alderman's thumb-ring;' and that the wearing of thumb-rings was pretty general in the seventeenth century is proved by Brome's remark that a good man in the city carried nothing rich about him but the gout and

a thumb-ring; and for an example nearer our own day, it may be noted that Dr Thomas Chalmers wore a thumb-ring once belonging to his great-great-great-grandfather.

Would-be hypnotisers should avoid trying conclusions with persons possessing longer-jointed thumbs than their own, for, if there is any truth in palmistry, the strength of one's will depends upon the formation of the thumb; the will-power of its owner being great or little according to the length or want of length of its upper joint. How the thumbs of Roman holiday-makers were formed mattered nothing to the defeated gladiator, whose fate hung upon their being bent forwards or backwards; a method of decreeing life or death to which, perhaps, we owe a man at another's mercy being said to be under his thumb. The Irish hero, Fingal, had the felicity to be under his own thumb, that member serving him as a danger-signal, aching in a peculiar way whenever trouble impended, when he had only to put it in his mouth to become immediately instructed how to overcome the difficulty of the hour. So, by the pricking of her thumbs telling her 'something wicked this way comes,' did the weird sister know of Macbeth's approach before her ears caught his footfall.

When a new member was initiated into the Westphalian Vehmgerichte, and swore to keep the secrets of the society from wife and child, father and mother, sister and brother, from fire and sword, from the things warmed by the sun or nourished by the rain, he did so with the thumb and two fingers of his right hand upon the cross hilt of a sword. An oath so taken was held irrevocable, and not to be annulled by even the Pope himself. In olden times, it was the pressure of the thumb upon the wax of a document's seal that made the deed a valid and binding instrument, and in verbal contracts the thumb ratified the bargain. Goths and Iberians completed an agreement by licking and joining their thumbs, as Scotsmen once did, and Moors still do; and rustic lovers once betrothed themselves by licking their respective master-fingers and then pressing them together, as they vowed to remain faithful to each other for ever and a day. Even now an Ulster man signifies his assent to a proposition with, 'We may lick thooms upo' that!' if he does not suit the action to the word like the lieutenant, who, in 1642, on being challenged to mortal combat by his own sergeant, accepted the duel by licking his thumb, saying, 'There is my parole for it.'

If Henry IV.'s popinjay envoy had not excited Hotspur's wrath by the way he manipulated his pounce-box with his finger and thumb on Homildon field, the king might have got his prisoners for the asking, and valiant Sir John lacked the chance of boasting he had slain Harry Percy after fighting a long hour by Shrewsbury clock. Had the mincing courtier intended to raise the ire of the 'Mars in swathing clothes,' he would have pocketed his pounce-box and bit his thumb at him; as Capulet's servitor Sampson bites his at Montague's men—'a disgrace to them if they bear it'; when, as they do not incline to let the insult pass unresented, swords are crossed; blows, swashing and otherwise, exchanged; until the enraged citizens joining in, there is as pretty a street fight as could be desired. Shouldering,

jeerings, and biting of thumbs were the favourite provocatives to quarrel with the 'roughs' of St Paul's Walk in Shakespeare's time, and many a braggart brawler bit the dust for biting his thumb at a better man.

Ingoldsby's vulgar little boy much shocked his benefactor when he 'put his thumb unto his nose and spread his fingers out'—a derisive bit of pantomime in vogue among the ancient Assyrians. More elaborate was Panurge's method of 'taking a sight' at Thaumaste. Lifting his right hand in the air, he put the thumb to his nose, holding his four fingers, straight out and closed, in a parallel line; then lifting his other hand, and stretching forth its fingers and elevating the thumb, he held it in a line with his right hand, a cubit and a half in front, and abased towards the ground both the one and the other hand. The gib-tongued street-boys seem now to have given the go-by to this time-honoured declaration of contemptuous defiance in dumb-show, preferring to give vocal expression to their sentiments.

To say a man works by rule of thumb is to reproach him with inexactness; but when Exchequer tallies were in use, a notch the width of a thumb represented exactly ten pounds. When drapers employed the clothyard wand, the possession of a narrow thumb was an advantage to an aspirant to the counter, as in measuring goods the buyer gained a thumb's width in every yard; but the adoption of a measure imbedded in the counter deprived slim-fingered ones of their advantage, and the draper's customers of their 'thumbs.' It is by-the-thumb the miller tests the character and qualities of the grain he grinds; spreading the sample over the fingers by a peculiar movement of the thumb, he gauges its value by the thumb itself. Continual action in this way makes the thumb assume a shape resembling the wide flattened head of the bulldog or Tommy Logge, a fish prevalent in mill-streams, which in consequence is popularly known as the Miller's Thumb.

Cornelius Ketel painted his pictures with his thumb, and it is still the picture-cleaner's safest tool. When sewing was rendered easier by the invention of the thimble, or thumbell as it was originally called, that useful article was worn upon the thumb, not the finger; and the Japanese dentist, disdaining any but Nature's appliances, finds his thumb and finger all suffice in the extraction of the most stubborn of aching teeth. Recounting the performances of a company of 'barn-stormers,' the *Connoisseur* says: 'I was much diverted at Sir Harry Wildair, whose chief action was a continual pressing together of the thumb and forefinger, which, had he lifted them to the nose, I should have thought he designed as an imitation of taking snuff; but I could easily account for this singular gesture, when I discovered that Sir Harry was no less a person than the dexterous Mr Clippet, the candle-snuffer'—without whom, Goldsmith tells us, a play would lose half its embellishments. According to an epilogue writer of the seventeenth century, it was then easy to distinguish the country from the town gallant in a theatre; the latter being known by putting his periwig in order with a comb, while his provincial brother was content to attain the same object with four fingers and a thumb.

A Chilian merchant used to defy forgery by placing one thumb on the paper he wished to sign, and tracing its outline; then he placed the other thumb across, outlined that, and his signature was complete. An impression of the thumb in ink would better serve the purpose, for we have Mr Francis Galton's assurance that the patterns made by the cuticle of the fingers do not vary so much between various periods of life, nor alter sufficiently by reason of other conditions, as to lose their individuality. The Chinese have long been aware that the impressions of no two thumbs, even of the same individual, are alike; and impressions of every criminal's thumbs are taken by the police and numbered for reference. He may disguise himself as he will, make up as he can; but a comparison of the impressions of his thumbs with that in the police archives settles the identity of an old offender beyond doubt. Had such a means of comparison been available in the famous contest for the Tichborne estates, certain believers in the Claimant would have had no excuse for plaguing the then Home Secretary by petitioning him, in the event of that worthy dying before the expiration of his sentence, to order his malformed thumb to be amputated and placed in the British Museum, 'to enable posterity to judge of an important matter connected with the Tichborne case.'

Children have come into the world sparsely provided as regards the members of the hand; some with but a thumb and index-finger, others with no thumb at all, or with hands like that of Mr Caesar, who represented Herefordshire during the last century, which was as nearly like a lobster's claw as a specimen of humanity could be expected to carry; a species of malformation he shared, according to the records of the Berlin Academy of Sciences, with a whole family of negroes dwelling near Paramaribo in 1759.

'S W E E P.'

ALCOFRIBAS, when he tells of the people who inhabited the two sides of his master Pantagruel's teeth, and who were entire strangers to each other, says: 'Then I began to think that it is very true which is commonly said, that one half of the world knoweth not how the other half liveth.' In the four centuries since Rabelais wrote, the number of ways in which the world lives has multiplied greatly. What do people generally know of 'sweep' as an article of commerce? Even if it is lengthened into sweepings, they will not be much the wiser. 'Sweep' is rubbish—the derivation of which is probably from rubble—but it is certainly very precious rubbish. It is a technical term for refuse arising from work done in gold and silver—platinum is only a small matter—whether that refuse is got together by the broom or obtained in more indirect ways.

Forty or fifty industries at the least are dependent on those who deal in gold and silver. Goldsmiths, silversmiths, jewellers, wedding-ring makers, diamond mounters, opticians, dentists, photographers, bookbinders, glass silverers, platers and gilders, surgical-instrument makers, watchcase makers, secret-springers and polishers (for watches), boot-makers (for eyelets), bur-

nishers, pencil-makers, penmakers, brushmakers, pursemakers, cabinet-makers, wire-drawers, lacemen, button-makers, stick-mounters, pipe-mounters, and so on, almost *ad infinitum*. The precious metals are not as water that, spilt on the ground, cannot be gathered again; they are indestructible and unconvertible, and can, and actually do, find their way back—like Silas Wegg's amputated leg,—to the source from which they flowed. Walking about Clerkenwell, the stranger will occasionally come upon a man carrying what looks something like a magnified cheese-taster on his shoulder; it is meant for sampling sweep, and the man is in the employ of a sweep-smelter. Sweep-smelting is a special business, and is in very few hands. It must not be confounded with ordinary refining; native metals of course have to be smelted, but all about gold and silver ores, and the way in which they are purified, can be learned from books.

Jewellers, and those who work directly in gold and silver, save as much as they can of their valuable refuse by literal sweeping. Some nail-strips of metal over the cracks in the flooring; others have more complicated arrangements, such as gratings which serve to diminish the amount of precious dust that might be carried away on the soles of the workmen's shoes. There is board-sweep, and lemel (the waste that comes of filing), and turnings (from the lathe), and pumicings (from the polishing done with pumice-stone); gold-beaters have skewings, which are remnants of gold-leaf. Hand-wash of course is worth preserving, and, in fact, everything with which the gold or silver worker comes in contact. All instruments used in refining when they are worn out have themselves to pass through the fire; crucibles and ladles are sure to have gold and silver attachments. The chimneys of furnaces have their sweepings and scrapings preserved and tested. The floor of a jeweller's workroom in the course of years, and with whatever precautions against waste, makes very good sweep. Sometimes the roof of a house acquires an artificial value. Means have been used, too, to compel the smoke of furnaces, by forcing it through water and lattice-work, to drop on its way the dust of gold which otherwise it would carry into the atmosphere. Workmen's caps, aprons, boots, blouses; the rags used by book-edge polishers, are worth burning down. In the old days, when ore was ground in mills worked by horses, the overflowings of the mill so affected the accumulations without, that they were found to be too precious to be used as manure, and became sweep under the genteel name of residue. Gilt-wood, cornices, old artificial teeth, in fact almost everything that has ever had gold in it, has some sort of worth.

It is to be expected that a trade dealing in such precious materials as gold and silver will be assailed by fraud. One of the oldest, easiest, and most profitable ways of creating sweep was by what was called sweating guineas. A file and a little leather bag were all the materials needed. A plump young guinea could spare a few grains to the sweater, and go on its way rejoicing. If it had not been for the gallows, which loomed darkly in the sweater's path, some substitute for a gold currency would have had to be found. Workers in gold are not always careful in leaving the fragments behind. An employer who felt

sure he was being robbed, after much watching and investigation, noticed a workman who had acquired the impolite habit of scratching his head. It turned out that his head would have made excellent sweep. The master had some inclination towards getting at the gold by the usual refining process, but mercifully fell back on the brush and comb.

Sampling sweep wants carefully looking after. A few grains of gold-dust mixed with the sample would make a considerable difference in the price offered for the bulk. But honest dealers have grown to be at least as artful as thieves, though men differ in the skill with which they sample sweep, just as they differ in their cleverness as to other things. To know just what to offer for sweep, especially if it be of an unusual kind, is given only to one who is an old hand at the business, and has, besides, a touch of genius. 'How do you mix your colours?' the great painter was asked, and he replied: 'With brains, sir.' In every profession brains tell. To an outsider, nothing would appear more worthless than a quantity of sweep, the offer for which might reach to three figures in the pound. If it were his, he would be asking himself what was the least he must give to have it carted away.

BY THE CHRISTMAS FIRE.

A PENNY for your thoughts, sweet wife !
Across the sparkling winter rime,
With tongues that clash in merry strife,
The bells ring out their Christmas chime.
In silence by the hearth you stand,
Amidst the Yule-fire's ruddy glow,
While Memory turns with tender hand
The page we folded long ago.

You watch the footpath o'er the hill—
Our path which led to rose-strewn ways:
Dear heart, do lovers walk there still ?
And whisper secrets nowadays ?
Do lads and maidens thither roam,
Unmindful of the drifted snow,
To carry Christmas holly home,
Or search in pairs for mistletoe ?

They said our bough seemed hard to find
Upon a certain bygone day,
Because we loitered far behind
The laughing groups that came our way.
But when the wintry sunset died,
And Night hung up the Christmas moon,
We two went homeward, side by side,
With hearts that beat one old, old tune.

Now, sons and daughters bend bright heads,
My dear, above your easy-chair,
And stoop to kiss the silver threads
Upon the darkness of your hair.
You say Life's winter has begun—
Ah, well ! Its keenest winds may blow :
I keep, thank God, the love I won
That happy Christmas years ago.

E. MATHESON.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, Limited,
47 Paternoster Row, LONDON ; and EDINBURGH.